

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of:

MV ETHAN ALLEN,  
 LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK,  
 OCTOBER 2, 2005

Docket No.: DCA-06-MM-001

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: KEN EDWARDS

National Transportation Safety Board  
 490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
 Washington, DC 20594

Wednesday,  
 January 4, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to  
 notice.

BEFORE: BOB FORD

## APPEARANCES:

BOB FORD  
National Transportation Safety Board

BRIAN CURTIS

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I N T E R V I E W

## INTERVIEW OF KEN EDWARDS

BY MR. FORD:

Q. Could you tell us when worked for Whaling City Dredge and Dry Dock?

A. When I worked?

Q. Right.

A. I retired in 1980.

Q. 1980.

A. I worked before that.

Q. When did you start working for them?

A. What say?

Q. When did you start working for the company?

A. In 1980. I retired. I was 65.

Q. Okay, but when did you begin? When did you first start working for them?

A. Well, I worked for them years ago.

Q. Did you work for them in the 1960s?

A. Yeah -- no, not the '60s. The '60s I was away. Well, maybe the late '60s.

Q. Okay, so you started with them in the late 1960s?

A. Well, I started before that. Actually I started -- oh man. I'm 90 and I don't remember back all these things.

Q. Okay, that's fine.

A. I worked for Thomas Scott in New Bedford Tool until I

1    went with -- I moved down there.  I guess it was in -- I don't  
2    know, it was pretty early.

3           Q.    Okay.

4           A.    The '50s, I think.  And I worked for them awhile down  
5    there.

6           Q.    Okay, do you remember the boat the "Double Dolphin"?

7           A.    Oh yeah, sure.

8           Q.    What can you tell us about the boat?

9           A.    The boats were all Dyer 40s.  They were fiberglass.  
10   And they were very quick fiberglass boats.  They were excellent  
11   built and strong.  And nothing anything wrong with the boats  
12   that I know of, because we took very good care of them.  I  
13   guess I can't understand why that one sank except they changed  
14   the top on it.

15          Q.    What type of top did it have when you were working  
16   for Whaling?

17          A.    Well, when they first come they didn't have any top,  
18   and then my boss, Clarence Sharp, he was the mayor of Groton  
19   City then.  And he wanted to put a top on one.  So they  
20   designed a top made out of small aluminum tubing.  In fact, I  
21   built the thing in the shop there.  I built it and made the  
22   little pieces, and then he hired a guy with a machine that  
23   could weld that light aluminum.  So he worked with me and we  
24   made all the pieces to fit, and they were all welded in.  It  
25   was a pretty solid thing.  And two guys could pick it up.

1 That's how much it weighed. It wasn't that heavy. And then he  
2 ordered regular awnings, a vinyl awning for the top, the way  
3 top piece. And then below that there was an open end -- oh,  
4 maybe a foot and a half wide, two foot, I don't know before --  
5 and then the rest of it went down and stopped above the  
6 passengers so they could see out. It was made so that if it  
7 tipped a little bit -- if any air went up under it, it could go  
8 out, would spill out the top. And it worked out fine. We  
9 never had any trouble with them.

10 Q. Do you remember what year that was, even approximate?

11 A. Oh boy. It was some time in the late '60s, I would  
12 say. Because I was working in Hyannis up until about '65 or  
13 '66, I guess.

14 Q. Okay, but you worked for Whaling when Clarence Sharp  
15 passed away, correct?

16 A. I what?

17 Q. Were you working -- were you still working for the  
18 company when Clarence Sharp died?

19 A. Yes, I was.

20 Q. And then you were there when the boats were sold to  
21 the company in Upstate New York?

22 A. Yeah, they were -- they were sold. The guy that  
23 bought them was a professor at the University of New Hampshire,  
24 and he came down -- also a coach, I guess. He brought a bunch  
25 of kids down to help him get ready to move the stuff, and they

1 kept calling him "Coach." They took them from there and they  
2 ran them down to New York, up the Hudson River, and into Lake  
3 Champlain and then down Lake Champlain -- they had to put them  
4 on a trailer to get them over to Lake George.

5 Q. Let me just say, I forgot -- I should have  
6 introduced. I have another man here, Brian Curtis. He's the  
7 engineering group chairman for this investigation and he'll be  
8 asking you a few questions in a few minutes. Was the aluminum  
9 frame still on the boats when they -- when the man came and got  
10 them?

11 A. When they took it up there, yeah.

12 Q. Okay. And you described, it was like a vinyl  
13 material that went over the aluminum frames?

14 A. Yes, sort of like a vinyl thing. It didn't leak and  
15 it was light. It wasn't a heavy material.

16 Q. Was it removable?

17 A. Huh?

18 Q. Was it where you could unpin it and remove it from  
19 the boat, the actual framing?

20 A. You could if you wanted to, yeah.

21 Q. And you said two people could carry them?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Would you have a general idea of the weight of the  
24 framing?

25 A. No. It wasn't very heavy.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. That's all I can say.

3 Q. Okay, I have the e-mail from your grandson. I just  
4 want to double-check some information.

5 A. I understand the boat that sank had Plexiglas sides  
6 to it. Did they have any vents for the air to get out?

7 Q. What they did was, they put a wood bulwark above the  
8 gunnels and then from the gunnels to that wood canopy they had  
9 what would be called Plexiglas windows.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And they were all in the up position when the boat  
12 was operated that day, when it had its accident.

13 A. Well, I know at a certain point the boats were tippy  
14 when the wind got to them. But that was because the people  
15 were always sitting up on the deck instead of down in the boat,  
16 you know. That was Mr. Sharp's idea. He wanted to get people  
17 up where they could see things. And the Coast Guard passed it.  
18 I had Coast Guard inspections every year and the Coast Guard  
19 was -- approved us very good.

20 Q. Do you remember where the Coast Guard inspectors came  
21 out of?

22 A. New London.

23 Q. They were New London, okay.

24 A. I think so, yeah.

25 Q. Okay, let me just double check this information your



1 grandson sent. You were a manager. Okay, did you actually  
2 manage the -- see the boats by water or were you also  
3 additional duties with that?

4 A. Well, I was the boss there. Actually, I took care of  
5 the boats and I hired most of the operators. We took care of  
6 hauling them and putting them -- taking them out of the water  
7 and putting them in the water, painting them. At the same time  
8 we had a 200-foot ferry there that we took care of. Mr. Sharp  
9 had bought that and he made a restaurant in there and we ran  
10 boats off the end of it. We had a little floating dock we put  
11 on the end. And we did very well until he died. Then they  
12 wanted to sell everything, you know.

13 Q. Okay, that was what I was going to ask you, though.  
14 You say you witnessed stability tests on the boat.

15 A. Yeah, they had -- I don't know about the "Double  
16 Dolphin." That was there before I started working on the  
17 boats, so -- but it was the same as the other two they bought.  
18 And they put -- they did stability tests on both of those.  
19 And what they did, we put sandbags with sand about -- I think  
20 they were about 150 pounds. And they put them on all the seats  
21 that would be occupied. And then they started taking off of  
22 there and putting them on the other side of the boat. And that  
23 took quite a lot. It finally brought the -- you know, the boat  
24 down, so the water was just about even with it. That's the way  
25 they did it.

1           Q.    Okay.  And by any chance did you have maybe the same  
2  inspector from the Coast Guard return each year or would you  
3  remember anyone in particular you dealt with at the Coast  
4  Guard?

5           A.    No, I don't remember their names now.  I'm in my 90s  
6  and this is a long time ago.

7           Q.    I understand.  It's a long shot, I know.  Did they  
8  put the same canopies on the "Sea Lion" and "Seahorse"?

9           A.    No, they stayed open.

10          Q.    Why --

11          A.    They had pipe frames up above them.  They had a  
12  speaker on each corner, because we had a tape machine that we  
13  ran.  And that was the only thing that was on them.  They were  
14  all wide open.

15          Q.    Do you remember a captain by the name of Stan Wilusz?

16          A.    Stan Wilusz -- yeah, I do.

17          Q.    Because you're confirming a lot of the information he  
18  told us, too.

19          A.    Yeah.

20          Q.    He was there for just a few years.  Is that correct?

21          A.    That's about right, I guess, yeah.

22          Q.    Okay.  Now I understand -- believe me, I understand.  
23  It's 40 years ago and, you know, people forget.  He described  
24  the below decks, the bilge areas, as hollow.  And he really  
25  didn't remember bulkheads.  But we sent him photos --

1           A.    Yeah, there were bulkheads. The fuel tank was down  
2   there, and I think we had some ballasts down there, too. I  
3   kind of forget that but --

4           Q.    What type of ballasts; do you recall?

5           A.    I don't remember.

6           MR. FORD: Do you want to ask some questions? Do you  
7   want to switch? I'm going to have Brian Curtis come on over  
8   and ask you some questions. I'll get him over to the speaker  
9   phone.

10          THE WITNESS: I remember most things about them  
11   because I took care of them quite a few years. Sometimes I  
12   hauled them. I ran the crane and hauled them. Sometimes a  
13   crane operator was there with a better crane, so he did it.  
14   But we picked them out and put them on a cradle every winter,  
15   and then we cleaned the bottom. We cleaned the topside and  
16   waxed them and put a canvas, a big canvas over them. We tied  
17   them down every winter.

18          BY MR. CURTIS:

19          Q.    Mr. Edwards, this is Brian Curtis. I just had a  
20   question. Did the vessels seem particularly tender?

21          A.    No, no, no.

22          Q.    No?

23          A.    No.

24          Q.    Pretty stable?

25          A.    Very stable.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I used to take them out and test them out. I'd run  
3 them wide open and then I'd turn them as hard as I could to one  
4 side, and they turned almost the within the normal length. But  
5 they were never very -- never unstable at all.

6 Q. And the engines, they were diesel engines. Is that  
7 correct?

8 A. Huh?

9 Q. The engines, they were diesel engines at that time?

10 A. Yeah, they were six-cylinder diesels, Lathrops.

11 Q. Six-cylinder, okay.

12 A. We put in Lathrops because they were -- had a factory  
13 down in Mystic, which they soon sold them to somebody else.

14 Q. That was one of my questions. I knew that they had  
15 Lathrops in them, and I've been having trouble just trying to  
16 locate any dealer that new much about those Lathrop engines.

17 A. Well, it would have been somebody in New London that  
18 made that awning, I'm sure. I don't know. I'll look around.  
19 If I have any picture of a boat I'll send them to you.

20 Q. That would be really good if you could.

21 A. Yeah, I know I've got some of them out of water  
22 somewhere there. I know they're around. I can't put my hands  
23 on them right at the moment.

24 Q. That would be outstanding. Before we get done I'll  
25 make sure you get Bob Ford's phone number here so you can call

1    them back once you -- if you locate some.

2           A.    Yeah.

3           Q.    Another area was the records for the boat, any  
4    maintenance records or any type of records.  Do you know of any  
5    records that were kept in the office there at the time?

6           A.    I wouldn't know that, because I wasn't in the office.  
7    I don't know if they kept any records.

8           Q.    Okay.

9           A.    They probably did, but I'm not sure.

10          Q.    Okay.

11          A.    Because I worked -- I did most of the work on the  
12    boats.  But one of Bob Sharp's daughters worked there, too.  
13    She made the schedules for the girls and I dug up my own  
14    operators.  So I had a lot of them on the first trip, too.  
15    They had licenses.  But we had one guy that had a license for  
16    all oceans, and he couldn't get that boat into the dock for  
17    nothing.  He needed a tow boat to push it in, I guess.

18          Q.    Yeah, we see some of that sometimes.

19                MR. FORD:  It could be a different world from deep  
20    sea to small boat handling.

21                THE WITNESS:  Yeah.  Well, I could handle it on a  
22    dime myself.

23                MR. FORD:  Some people just never get it.

24                THE WITNESS:  They were excellent handling.  They had  
25    large rudders on them.

1 BY MR. CURTIS:

2 Q. Did the boat operate directly from Whaling City under  
3 the bridge, or did you go to down -- another area to pick up  
4 passengers?

5 A. No, no, right at -- under the bridge there on Groton.  
6 We had the ferry anchored out there and we had the floating  
7 dock on the end of it. Then when he -- they sold the ferry, we  
8 ran it off the beach. We had a little pier there and put a  
9 float in there and ran it for a year like that.

10 Q. And you ran it up to where that -- where now the  
11 "Nautilus" is, by the submarine base, correct?

12 A. What was that?

13 Q. What route did you ride at the time, up by the  
14 "Nautilus," the submarine base, or where did you go for a  
15 route?

16 A. Yeah. I went up off the sub base and turned around,  
17 came back the other side down by the Coast Guard Academy, under  
18 the bridge, and showed them the State Pier and everything, and  
19 went on down where the Navy had an outfit down there, and then  
20 went -- crossed over by EEB, where they built the subs and came  
21 up along that side and back up again. It was a one-hour trip.

22 Q. Okay, one-hour. There was some writings around we've  
23 seen. We haven't been able to verify it -- that possibly the  
24 decks were raised a few inches. Do you recall any activity  
25 there where the deck heights may have been changed on those

1 vessels?

2 A. When the what got changed?

3 Q. The heights of the decks, the original deck, height,  
4 maybe they added a timber to get a higher deck height. Do you  
5 recall any activity of construction?

6 A. When they left here it had the aluminum top on it  
7 that I put on it.

8 Q. I mean the actual -- the main deck itself, you know,  
9 above the engine space. There's been some talk that that main  
10 deck level, the main deck was actually raised possibly. Do you  
11 recall anything being done there?

12 A. Not that I recall. The boats were in good running  
13 condition when they left here.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And they had no trouble with them, taking them all  
16 the way up there.

17 BY MR. FORD:

18 Q. What I would like to do, we'll do a summary of notes  
19 of these -- of what we've asked you and what you've answered  
20 and send you a copy of it.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. And we'll send, also, a self-addressed FedEx  
23 envelope. And you could just mark freely on the notes what --  
24 if you see something you don't agree with, you can write it  
25 right on the sheet of paper and send it back. And maybe we

1 also may think, before I send it out to you, of anymore  
2 questions that may come up.

3 A. Because I know they -- when that first happened, they  
4 were spreading the thing that the time we were running them  
5 around here they were taking extra passengers, which was not  
6 the truth. We took exactly what the boat was -- set for --  
7 licensed for.

8 BY MR. CURTIS:

9 Q. Do you recall what it was licensed for capacity-wise?  
10 Do you remember?

11 A. The what?

12 Q. Do you recall how many passengers it was licensed to  
13 carry?

14 A. No, not that I know of. We didn't have any -- these  
15 were made carry just one operator, you know. That's why it was  
16 way in the stern, so he could keep track of them.

17 Q. Do you recall how many passengers the Coast Guard  
18 licensed it to carry? You know, was it --

19 A. Well, it was -- what was it -- 48, I think.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And they could carry -- you know, if they need a mate  
22 on there, they could have one. We went like -- when the  
23 Harvard-Yale races on, we'd load up a lot of people and we'd  
24 have a mate on there then, to put the anchor out and haul it in  
25 again and so forth.



1       Q.   All right, we'll get these notes out to you of  
2   today's conversation.  And if you do find any photos, we could  
3   check back with you next week, say.

4       A.   Yeah, I'm home most of the time.

5       Q.   Okay.  I'll give you Mr. Ford's phone number now if  
6   you'd like, if you have any questions for us, any more  
7   information you think of.

8       A.   Well, if you have any more questions, you know, you  
9   can write me.

10      Q.   Okay.

11           MR. FORD:  I'll send it out to him.

12           MR. CURTIS:  Okay, well, we'll send that out to you.  
13   Yeah, if you find any of those photos that would be really  
14   great.  Because I think those would tell more of the story.

15           THE WITNESS:  Did my grandson give you my box number?

16           MR. FORD:  I have Rose Avenue, Oak Bluffs,  
17   Massachusetts, but not a box number.

18           THE WITNESS:  The box number is 1879.

19           MR. FORD:  1879, Post Office Box 1879.

20           THE WITNESS:  Oak Bluffs, yeah.

21           MR. FORD:  Oak Bluffs -- and the Zip code?

22           THE WITNESS:  02557.

23           MR. FORD:  02557.  Excellent.  I'll be getting this  
24   package off to you tomorrow.

25           THE WITNESS:  Anything you want -- you know, if you

1 think of more questions, send them up and I'll do my best to  
2 answer them.

3 MR. FORD: Thank you very much, sir. We appreciate  
4 your help.

5 MR. CURTIS: Thank you much. I don't think you've  
6 lost your memory at all. I think you've done quite well.

7 THE WITNESS: I've been watching this thing ever  
8 since I read it in the paper and I can't really figure out why,  
9 except that plastic windows they had on the side.

10 BY MR. CURTIS:

11 Q. Did the media contact you at all?

12 A. Do what? I was going to ask you. I've been up on --  
13 up to Saint George several times, and every time I was there it  
14 was like a millpond. Does that get pretty rough up there?

15 Q. Not really. The day of the accident it was actually  
16 no wind and a nice sunny day.

17 A. There wasn't any wind?

18 Q. No. It was a very nice day with no wind that day,  
19 actually.

20 A. It didn't spring a leak somewhere?

21 Q. Well, we're trying -- if it did, we'll try to locate  
22 it. But those are all the things that we look into to try to  
23 get the cause of these accidents.

24 A. It would be something like a sea cog going or  
25 something.

1           MR. CURTIS: Yeah, we're certainly taking a look at  
2 all that as well.

3           MR. FORD: We're supposed to get the report to the  
4 board in the summer, which means probably in the fall we'll  
5 have a published copy. And we'll definitely send you a  
6 published copy of our report.

7           THE WITNESS: Well, I'd be interested to see what you  
8 come up with.

9           MR. FORD: Okay.

10          MR. CURTIS: Well, thanks a lot, Mr. Edwards, and  
11 we'll be sending that package out to tomorrow.

12          THE WITNESS: That was part of my life for quite a  
13 while, taking care of those.

14          MR. CURTIS: Well, when all said and done we'll make  
15 sure you get a copy, sir. All right, thank you much.

16          MR. FORD: Thanks again. Bye.

17          THE WITNESS: Bye.

18          (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled  
19 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:            Investigation of MV Ethan Allen  
                                 Lake George, New York  
                                 October 2, 2005  
                                 Interview of Ken Edwards

DOCKET NUMBER:            DCA 06 MM 001

PLACE:                        Washington, D.C.

DATE:

was held according to the record, and that this is the  
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been  
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phyllis Jarvis  
Transcriber